

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUITO 01040 01 OF 02 170024Z
ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7331
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 QUITO 1040

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDUR
TAGS: PBOR, PEBR, EC, PE, CI
SUBJECT: EMBASSY'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE LATEST "DUST-UP"
BETWEEN ECUADOR AND PERU

REFS: A) STATE 036443; B) 77 STATE 283178; C) 77 STATE
261696; D) 77 QUITO 7475; E) 77 LIMA 9629;
F) STATE 039500; G) LIMA 1357; H) STATE 040486

SUMMARY: IN EXAMINING LATEST FLARE-UP BETWEEN ECUADOR
AND PERU, EMBASSY ASSESSES FONMIN AYALA'S REMARKS ON
AMAZONIAN ACCESS AS INCAUTIOUS IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES,
BUT UNEXCEPTIONABLE IN THE LIGHT OF TRADITIONAL
ECUADOREAN RHETORIC. PERU'S ATTEMPTS TO CHARACTERIZE
ECUADOR'S MOTIVES AS BASED ON ELECTIONEERING OR CON-
SPIRACY WITH CHILE SEEM UNSUPPORTED BY THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
THE CURRENT ECUADOREAN CONSENSUS REGARDING THE DANGER
OF A CONTINUING CONFRONTATION WITH PERU AND THE NECESSITY
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PAGE 02 QUITO 01040 01 OF 02 170024Z

TO EXTRICATE ITSELF FROM IT VIA A QUID PRO QUO
INVOLVING ECUADOR'S RECOGNITION OF THE RIO PROTOCOL
AND PERU'S ACQUIESCENCE IN A SYMBOLIC SOVEREIGN ACCESS
TO THE AMAZON SUGGESTS A CONCILIATORY, RATHER THAN PRO-
VOCATIVE POLICY. THE REPRESENTATIONS BY PERUVIAN SPOKES-
MAN DURING RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH USG OFFICIALS RE-
GARDING PERU'S WILLINGNESS TO ENTERTAIN ECUADOREAN

TERRITORIAL HOPES DURING THE BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS SUGGEST THAT PERU HAS SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT PURSUING NEGOTIATIONS ON THE BASIS SUGGESTED BY PRESIDENT CARTER.

1. THE EMBASSY FEELS THAT A NUMBER OF FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE LATEST "DUST-UP" BETWEEN ECUADOR AND PERU OVER ECUADOR'S EFFORTS TO REGAIN SOVEREIGN ACCESS TO THE AMAZON RIVER HAVE BEEN FLOTTED OVER OR DISTORTED BY PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN IN THEIR RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH USG OFFICIALS IN LIMA AND WASHINGTON. IN OFFERING OUR COMMENTS WE ARE BEARING IN MIND THE DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE TO "ENCOURAGE PERU AND ECUADOR TO DISCUSS THEIR BORDER PROBLEMS CONSTRUCTIVELY SO AS TO PROVIDE ECUADOR SOME ACCESS TO THE AMAZON" (AMBASSADOR'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES-ECUADOR, REF A), WITHOUT SUGGESTIONS OF SPECIFIC TERMS OF SETTLEMENT OR SPECIFIC NEGOTIATING TECHNIQUES (REFS B AND C).

2. FONMIN AYALA'S FEBRUARY 12 SPEECH TO WHICH PERU RESPONDED SO STRONGLY, WAS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH WHAT ECUADOREAN LEADERS HAVE BEEN SAYING FOR THE LAST THREE DECADES. IT WAS, HOWEVER, INCAUTIOUS AND EXTREMELY IMPRUDENT IN THE CONTEXT OF WHAT THE ECUADOREANS THEMSELVES SUSPECT IS A PERIOD WHEN PERU IS LOOKING FOR AN EXCUSE TO BACK OUT OF THE BILATERAL TALKS. WE CONCLUDE THAT AYALA WAS PROBABLY TRYING TO REPLY TO

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PAGE 03 QUITO 01040 01 OF 02 170024Z

PERUVIAN FONMIN DE LA PUENTE'S FEBRUARY 7 INTERVIEW IN OIGA. IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A MISGUIDED EXERCISE IN MACHISMO--CERTAINLY OUT OF CHARACTER, BUT PERHAPS FELT NECESSARY BY HIM JUST FOR THIS REASON, I.E., THE GOE MAY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT AYALA'S PREVIOUS RHETORICAL RESTRAINT ON THE FISHING BOAT INCIDENT AND BORDER INCIDENTS MAY HAVE ACTUALLY ENCOURAGED A MORE OBSTREPEROUS PERUVIAN ATTITUDE. HOWEVER, AYALA MAY HAVE THOUGHT THAT HIS ADDRESSING HIS REMARKS TO A PURELY INTERNAL AUDIENCE WOULD HAVE SOFTENED THEM.

3. THE GOE SEEMS GENUINELY NONPLUSSED BY THE PERUVIAN REACTIONS AND IS VERY DISCOURAGED BY THE NOW SEEMINGLY ILLUSORY PROGRESS THAT WAS MADE TOWARD ECUADOR'S GOAL OF SOVEREIGN ACCESS. MEETINGS WITH DE LA PUENTE AND MORALES BERMUDEZ IN SANTIAGO WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK AND PRIVATE TALKS WHICH REACHED POINT OF WORKING ON A DRAFT TO EXCHANGE NOTES (REF D) GAVE GOE AMPLE REASON TO BELIEVE GOP WAS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO GIVE ECUADOR SOVDUEIGN ACCESS (ALBEIT LESS THAN GOE WANTS), AND THIS WAS CONFIRMED BY DE LA PUENTE TO AMBASSADOR SCHLAUDEMANN (REFND). PERUVIAN PUBLIC DECLARATIONS AND CONVERSA-

TIONS WITH USG IGNORE THIS (REFS F AND G).

4. PERU'S ATTEMPTS TO CHARACTERIZE "IRRESPONSIBLE"
ECUADOREAN ACTIONS AS RESPONSIVE TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL
PROBLEMS OR TO A NEW ANDEAN POLITICO-MILITARY SITUATION
CREATED BY THE DIVERSION OF CHILE'S ATTENTION TOWARD
ARGENTINA SEEM TO INVOLVE NOT A LITTLE THE POT CALLING
THE KETTLE BLACK. NEITHER AYALA NOR ECUADOR'S MILITARY
LEADERS ARE RUNNING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE, NOR DO THEY CON-
TEMPLATE HOLDING ON TO THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS FOR MUCH
LONGER. IN ORDER TO PURSUE ITS OBJECTIVES WITH A
MINIMUM OF POLITICAL FLACK, IT BEHOOVES THE GOE FOR
INTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS TO CALM PASSIONS AND ACT CIR-
CUMSPECTLY, NOT TO STIR THEM UP AND DRAMATIZE THE ISSUE
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PAGE 04 QUITO 01040 01 OF 02 170024Z

AS THE PERUVIANS HAVE SUGGESTED. WITH REGARD TO A POSSIBLE
CONSPIRACY WITH CHILE, GIVEN PERU'S MILITARY SUPERIORITY,
IT WOULD BE THE HEIGHT OF NATIONAL RASHNESS FOR ECUADOR
TO ADOPT A PURPOSELY PROVOCATIVE POLICY TOWARD PERU JUST
WHEN PERU IS MOMENTARILY FREE TO DEVOTE MORE ATTENTION
TO ECUADOR.

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PAGE 01 QUITO 01040 02 OF 02 170049Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 QUITO 1040

LIMDIS

5. WHILE PERU, AS AMBASSADOR SCHLAUDEMANN SUGGESTS, MIGHT BE EVENTUALLY INCITED INTO MAKING A PUNITIVE ATTACK AGAINST ECUADOR, THE GOE BELIEVES THAT IT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY MEASURED IN ITS RESPONSE TO WHAT GOE OFFICIALS REGARD AS PERUVIAN PROVOCATION IN THE FISHING BOAT INCIDENT, THE GOP ESCALATION OF A BORDER INCIDENT OF A KIND THAT HAS OCCURRED OFTEN IN THE PAST INTO A MAJOR INCIDENT, AND GOP PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE BORDER WHILE NEGOTIATIONS WERE SUPPOSEDLY BEING CONDUCTED. WE DOUBT THAT PERU WILL FIND MUCH LEGITIMATE JUSTIFICATION FOR AN ATTACK IN THE CURRENT ECUADOREAN MOOD.

6. THE PERUVIAN CHARGE THAT THE GOE'S INSISTENCE ON SOVEREIGN ACCESS TO THE AMAZON IS AN IMPEDIMENT TO ANDEAN INTEGRATION IS PERHAPS NO MORE VALID THAN THE IDEA THAT PERU'S REVERSAL OF ITS DISPOSITION TO NEGOTIATE THE SUBJECT IS AN OBSTACLE. AT LEAST PRESIDENT PEREZ OF

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PAGE 02 QUITO 01040 02 OF 02 170049Z

VENEZUELA WOULD SEEM TO ADOPT THIS POSITION.

7. THE SUGGESTION OF FOREIGN MINISTER DE LA PUENTE THAT THE SCHEDULED VISIT TO PERU NEXT WEEK OF ADMIRAL OLMEDO MIGHT SERVE TO HELP CALM THE WATERS, AND THE USG DECISION TO ENCOURAGE THE VISIT (REF H) COULD EVENTUALLY HELP TO BETTER THE CURRENT RELATIONSHIP. GOE OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, HAVE PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED TO EMBOFFS GREAT SKEPTICISM ABOUT EXCHANGE VISITS BETWEEN PERUVIAN MILITARY VIPS WITH THOSE OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND HAVE CHARACTERIZED THEM AS A SMOKE SCREEN BEHIND WHICH THE GOP CONTINUES TO INCREASE ITS ARMS SUPERIORITY AND PURSUE GOALS AT ODDS WITH BASIC INTERESTS OF NEIGHBORS. FOR THIS REASON, THE CARRYING THROUGH OF THE VISIT MIGHT BE RESISTED HERE.

8. ECUADOR'S CURRENT ATTITUDE TOWARD PERU MUST ALSO BE SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF THE SLOW, BUT STEADY CREATION OF A CONSENSUS AMONG OPINION LEADERS AND POLICY MAKERS OVER THE PAST YEAR THAT ECUADOR MUST SOMEHOW EXTRICATE ITSELF FROM ITS CONTINUING CONFRONTATION WITH PERU. THIS OBJECTIVE IS BASED ON THE ASSESSMENT THAT THE WIDENING GAP IN MILITARY STRENGTH BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IS CREATING DANGEROUS TEMPTATIONS FOR THE PERUVIAN MILITARY AND THAT ECUADOR, DESPITE ITS CURRENT ECONOMIC STRENGTH, IS IN NO POSITION TO COMPETE WITH PERU IN AN ARMS RACE. A COROLLARY IS ECUADOREAN CONCERN THAT ECUADOR'S AMBIGUOUS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE RIO PROTOCOL

AND THE RHETORICAL EXCESSES WHICH ARE ENGENDERED BY THE CONFRONTATION WILL CONTINUE TO PRESENT PERU WITH PRETEXTS FOR ARMED CONFLICT WHICH MAY EVENTUATE WITH THE LOSS OF EVEN MORE ECUADOREAN TERRITORY (PARTICULARLY ITS OIL FIELDS). THIS CONSENSUS HAS SPREAD AMONG THE MILITARY, AMONG CIVILIAN POLITICIANS, WITHIN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUITO 01040 02 OF 02 170049Z

AND IN THE MASS MEDIA. ALTHOUGH THIS NEW, THOUGHTFUL ATTITUDE IS REPLACING OUT-AND-OUT JINGOISM AS THE MAJORITY SENTIMENT AMONG OPINION LEADERS, IT IS STILL A FRAGILE AND DELICATE THING WHICH MUST BE NURTURED FURTHER BEFORE IT IS COMPLETELY IMMUNE FROM BEING ROLLED BACK BY THE ATTACKS OF THE ULTRAS. THIS INCREASINGLY PREVALENT ATTITUDE AMONG ECUADOR'S TOP LEADERSHIP HARDLY CAN BE RECONCILED WITH THE PROVOCATIVE, WAR-MONGERING ATTITUDE IMPUTED TO ECUADOR BY PERU.

9. THE QUESTION FOR ECUADOR'S LEADERS IS HOW TO REACH A SETTLEMENT WITH PERU--WHICH THEY IMPLICITLY RECOGNIZE MUST INCLUDE THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE RIO PROTOCOL--ON TERMS WHICH WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY DIGNIFIED TO BE DEFENDED AGAINST NATIONALISTIC CENSURE FOR ACCEPTING ANYTHING LESS THAN THE BOUNDARIES EXTANT IN 1830. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SEEMINGLY BELIEVES THE WAY OUT OF THE DILEMMA IS THROUGH THE RIO PROTOCOL BEING OPEN TO FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS BY THE VERY FACT THAT THE BORDER CANNOT NOW BE DETERMINED FOR SOME 100 KILOMETERS, OWING TO A MISTAKEN GEOGRAPHICAL PREMISE IN THE TREATY. THE R3# BELIEVES THAT ACQUISITION OF SOME FORM OF TERRITORIAL ACCESS TO THE AMAZON UNDER THE RUBRIC OF THE RIO PROTOCOL COULD SATISFY ITS SYMBOLIC NEEDS AS WELL AS PERU'S DESIRE FOR STABILIZED BORDERS. (NB - IT IS SIGNIFICANT TO NOTE IN THIS SYMBOLIC CONTEXT THAT ECUADOR CONSIDERS THE MARANON RIVER, WHICH LIES DUE SOUTH OF THE UNDEMARKABLE BOUNDARY NOT A TRIBUTARY, BUT A PART OF THE AMAZON ITSELF, A PERCEPTION SUPPORTED BY THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA).

10. ALTHOUGH ECUADOR IS AS RELUCTANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLICLY ITS PROJECTED ACCEPTANCE OF THE RIO PROTOCOL AS PERU IS REGARDING TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS, THESE TWO POINTS HAVE IN FACT BEEN AT THE HEART OF THE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN HELD AT VARIOUS LEVELS SINCE LAST AUGUST. DESPITE PERUVIAN ATTEMPTS NOW CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 QUITO 01040 02 OF 02 170049Z

TO PORTRAY THE EXPRESSION OF ECUADOREAN DESIRES FOR
BASOVEREIGN ACCESS AS WILD-EYED AND PROVOCATIVE AND TO
DISTORT THE NATURE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS IN ORDER TO GLOSS
OVER ITS EVER HAVING ENTERTAINED SUCH A QUID PRO QUO,
THE TALKS COULD NEVER HAVE PROCEEDED ON ANY OTHER BASIS.
THAT THE PERUVIANS LATELY HAVE BEEN LESS THAN CANDID WITH US
ON THIS POINT SUGGESTS VERY STRONGLY THAT THEY HAVE HAD
SECND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE BASIS
SUGGESTED BY PRESIDENT CARTER.
CORR

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED.

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